

Come follow Christ



in the footsteps of St Chad



Curacy in the Diocese
of Lichfield



Title post at
St Luke's and St Paul's
churches in the
team benefice of
Leek & Meerbrook



Two of five churches in a mostly
market town benefice
Evangelical churchmanship within
a diverse team.

Welcome to Lichfield Diocese

Cradled at the intersection of the Midlands and the North, and the interface between England and Wales, the Diocese of Lichfield is the ancient centre of Christianity in what was the Kingdom of Mercia.

We are rightfully grateful for the inheritance we have from St Chad that leads us to focus on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism as we live and serve among the communities of Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country.

Wherever in the Diocese you may be placed, you will benefit from being part of a wider family, mixing with people serving in a wide variety of contexts – from the grittiest inner-city neighbourhoods of Stoke and the Black Country, to the leafiest rural parishes of Staffordshire and Shropshire, to the sparsest upland communities of the Staffordshire

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a Church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a Church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope.

(Diocesan Vision Statement)

Moorlands and Welsh Borders.

And we embrace the widest spectrum of church traditions – evangelical and catholic, liberal and conservative, choral and charismatic, as we journey together – as a colleague recently put it, it is our goal to be a ‘spacious and gracious diocese’.

‘...a spacious and gracious diocese

It is my determination and that of my episcopal colleagues that your calling to a title post will be a time of encouragement, ongoing formation, challenge and (while rarely unbridled) joy. Our colleagues among the diocesan staff keenly bring their various specialisms both spiritual and practical to serve our parishes, fresh expressions, schools and chaplaincies.



+Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave
Bishop of Lichfield

A caring diocese

Lichfield Diocese is one of the largest in the country, covering an area of 1744 square miles and serving a population of more than 2 million.

The diocese consists of three episcopal areas with three Area Bishops (of Wolverhampton, Stafford and Shrewsbury) ministering alongside the Diocesan Bishop, each overseeing a different geographic area. This indicates the diocese’s commitment to its different contexts, and to the pastoral care of our clergy.

Homes and schools

We aim to provide high quality housing for our clergy with a continuous programme of improvements to houses and responsive, specialist contractors for emergencies.

As well as the 208 Church of England schools in the Diocese, there are many good schools and colleges that will welcome clergy’ children, and a

number of higher education centres can be found in Stoke, Keele, Stafford, Shrewsbury, Telford, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

Vocation and mission of all

Our vision for the diocese is that all people, lay and ordained alike, will grow ever more deeply into their vocation as disciples of Christ. We hope to become a Church where all our members are equipped to know they are called by God to worship and to be the eyes, hands, feet and mouth of Christ in their own contexts.

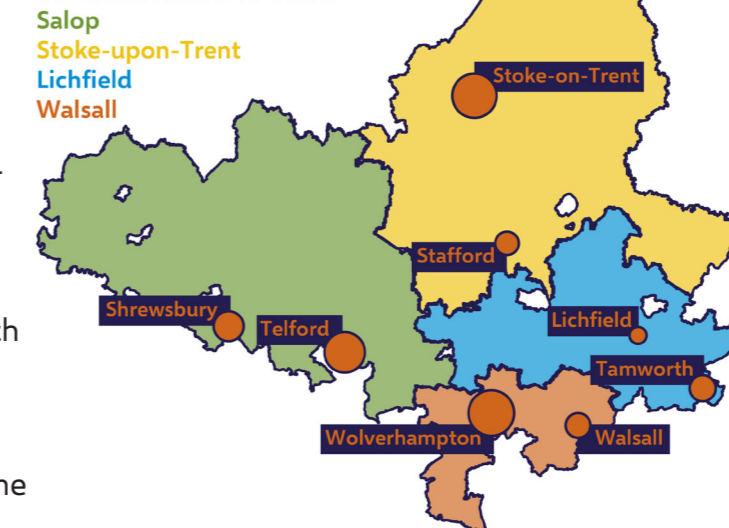
To further these aims, and to develop creative patterns of ministry, we ask all training parishes to offer ‘sixth-day’ opportunities for curates – which might be a chaplaincy attachment (school, hospital, prison or hospice), involvement with local gardening ventures, night-shelter involvement – to mention just a few possibilities.



“Our time as a family in my curacy in rural Shropshire has been one of the best of our lives. I’ve learned that the priestly role is vital in the community. I’m particularly enjoying working with seniors, and enabling the giftings of others which resulted in a successful Messy Church starting in one of the villages. I give thanks to God for this special time, and for everyone who’s been there for me and supported me throughout.”

Revd Jassica Castillo-Burley

The Four Archdeaconries of Lichfield Diocese



Everything but the sea



David Rayner (Wikipedia) / Stoke-on-Trent Bottle Kiln / CC BY-SA 2.0 BY-SA 4.0

Staffordshire prides itself on being ‘the Creative County’: Shropshire is the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and the Black Country is renowned for its industry and all have significant opportunities for spouses who wish to develop careers in any sphere.

For those days off when you need space away from the parish, the area has everything you could wish for – except the sea: wild landscapes, cultured museums and stately homes. Sports of many kinds (including Premiership football) and at least two theme parks

Shrewsbury Flax Mill – the prototype skyscraper / Tk420 (Wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 4.0



Opening of the Lighthouse Project at Kingsland CE Academy, Bucknall



Road and rail links



For those with family and friends in other parts of the country, the Diocese has great transport links: the M6/M6Toll bisects the centre of the Diocese north-south, and the M5 originates at our southern tip. Heading west, the A5/M54 give easy access to north and mid Wales, while the A50, A5 and M6Toll give swift access to the M1, M42 and A38 for the East Midlands and the south-east.

Rail links are also good with all major towns having direct services to London and Birmingham and four major airports surround our borders – Birmingham, East Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool.



Dovedale (location of one of the Diocese’s two residential retreat centres) / Shaun Dunmall (wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 2.0 4.0

Leisure and pleasure

Lichfield Diocese has everything but the sea. For walkers and climbers, there’s an extensive network of canals, Cannock Chase, The Roaches, and the Shropshire—Welsh borders (for example). If you’re into more organised fun, Alton Towers and Drayton Manor Theme Park

Wightwick Manor nr Wolverhampton / Tony Hisgett (Wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 4.0



can provide it. And then there’s many museums including Walsall’s New Art Gallery and the RAF museum at Cosford; not to mention excellent sporting options for both watching and participating – from Premiership football to the Tamworth Snowdome. Along with Wedgwood, theatres and cinemas, restaurants and superb tea shops just begging to be discovered...



Apedale Valley Light Railway near Stoke with the adjacent country park and Heritage Centre is one of many transport and leisure museums in the Diocese / Simon Jones

If shopping is your thing, there is a range of options, from the chic boutiques at Barton Marina, and Shrewsbury to large malls in or near the urban centres. We’re fortunate in being the home of many fine ales and beers brewed in Burton on Trent (the museum is well worth a visit), and Staffordshire oatcakes are a unique local delicacy to be discovered.



Wulfrun Centre in Wolverhampton is one of many shopping destinations in the region © Roger Kidd -/ geograph.org.uk/p/1171894/ CC BY 2.0

Alton Towers near Uttoxeter / Jeremy Thompson/Flickr / CC BY 2.0



The Benefice



Leek is a rural market town nestled at the top of Lichfield Diocese with an approximate population of 20,000 residents. St Luke's and St Paul's are two sister churches at the east end of the town.

St Luke's was built in 1848 and is a grade 2* listed building. It was modernised internally around the time of the millennium providing a two-storey church centre with meeting rooms church office and kitchen and toilet facilities.

St Paul's is located in Haregate, at the far east of the town on Novi Lane. Built in the 1970's it is a church and community centre with a large hall



which is popular with many local groups.

Both churches work together considering themselves to be a single church in two buildings. The church is run by a single PCC and leadership team, with a joint vision and mission statement.

Leek is unusual in that it works with the middle school system. First (reception – yr4), middle (yr5-yr8) and secondary (yr9 – yr13). There are multiple schools, both church and local authority, who are all part of the Talentum Learning Trust (excluding St Edward's) with multiple opportunities for ministry engagement.

Leek's main source of employment was the textile industry. There are many mill buildings still around the town which have been repurposed and Leek is very proud of its textile heritage.

St Luke's and St Paul's are both churches with a very modern outlook. They are seeking to engage with the local communities around them and serve those in real need.

St Luke's has been streaming services since the covid pandemic on zoom, while also posting content onto YouTube.

Services in the churches:

St Luke's and St Paul's have quite a wide range of services and styles serving the congregations in the type of worship that they require.

St Luke's has a formal organ led service at 9:30 every Sunday. This alternates between morning prayer and a communion service with some sung content. At 11:15 is the family service, which is led by a music group and has children's groups for ages 0-16.

St Paul's has a family service at 10am, which draws in from the local Haregate area. There is also a mid-week prayer and praise service every Wednesday evening at 7:30pm. This is very informal, but has a strong focus on spending time with God, and listening to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

	St Luke's	St Paul's
1st	9:30am – Morning Prayer (CW) 11:15am – Family Worship	10:00am – Family Communion Wed 7:30pm – Prayer and Praise
2nd	9:30am – Holy Communion (CW) 11:15am – Family Worship	10:00am – Family Worship Wed 7:30pm – Prayer and Praise
3rd	9:30am – Morning Prayer (CW) 11:15am – Family Worship	10:00am – Family Worship Wed 7:30pm – Prayer and Praise
4th	9:30am – Holy Communion (CW) 11:15am – Family Worship	10:00am – Family Worship Wed 7:30pm – Prayer and Praise
5th	United Service 10:30 alternating between churches	

Both worship and children's ministries are important to both churches and are valued in our services. There is also a strong lay engagement in both service leading and preaching bringing diversity to the content, but also moving away from a clergy centric focus.





Your Training Incumbent

Revd Matt Malins

St Luke's Vicarage, Novi Lane, Leek, ST13 6NR

- **Trained:** St John's College, Nottingham
- **Ordained:** 2012, Lichfield
- **Curacy:** St George's Tamworth
- **Vicar since** 2016

Before ordination Matt studied acoustics at Salford University then worked for Shropshire Council as an IT/AV technician. Matt is married to Cathy with children Amelia (13) and Jacob (12). Matt is friendly and approachable and a keen team worker.

Beyond the parish Matt is an AV advisor for the diocese, he is on the diocesan property operations group and is a member of diocesan synod.

Outside of ministry Matt can be found either playing one of his many instruments or hiding in the garage working on his next woodwork project. He has built his own drum kit bringing these two passions together and is always on the lookout for the next project. Matt is also a bushcrafting vicar leading outdoor worship at the annual bushcraft show.



Context

Leek is a delightful market town with a population of around 20,000 people. Nestled in the Staffordshire Moorlands, Leek sits on the



edge of the Peak District National Park, close to the dramatically jagged rocks of Hen Cloud, Ramshaw Rocks and The Roaches.

There are many buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries and the town is characterised by pleasingly designed buildings heavily influenced by the Victorian 'Arts and Crafts' movement.

The market square and main shopping street hosts a bustling market each week as well as occasional Farmer's Food & Craft markets.

Major employers in the area include Alton Towers theme park and JCB company. In addition, Leek has a proud tradition of supporting independent businesses in

The Congregations in numbers:

	2018	2019	2021
Electoral Roll	118	117	120
Average Sunday Attendance Adults	105	100	65*
Average Sunday Attendance Children	23	23	11*
Baptisms			
Marriages	3	1	3
Funerals	67	39	44

*Some figures are missing/affected because of covid



the locality. Large centres of population and employment, such as Stoke-on-Trent, Manchester and Derby, are within regular commuting distance.

Leek has a wide range of sporting facilities, including a swimming pool and leisure centre, Leek Town Football Club, a cricket club, rugby club and hockey club and also a sailing club and rowing club at the nearby Rudyard Lake.

In addition to Alton Towers and as part of the expanding tourism industry in the area, other attractions include the Churnet Valley heritage railway, Peak Wildlife Park, Coombes Valley nature reserve and Tittesworth Water.





The ministry

Mission Action Plan

St Luke's and St Paul's vision and mission action plan were drawn up in 2017 and are currently under review in September 2022.

The current vision is to Seek, Build, Share and Love.

To **seek** God in our worship and praise. To make him the focus of our doing and the reason for our service. To **build** our relationships with each other and the community around us. To **share** our faith with others so that the Kingdom of God grows and to demonstrate our **love** through our actions. To engage with social action and practical acts of service, so our actions match our words.

In 2022 we hope our new mission action plan will direct us to engage with our community by addressing issues like fuel poverty, environmental challenges and social isolation.

St Luke's

St Luke's may be a traditional building on the outside, but is very different on the inside. The church is very forward looking and wanting to engage with the community around it through



its building and facilities, but also through its congregations and their ministries at home.

The church is very much a tale of two congregations. The 9:30 with its older congregation is more traditional in its outlook and approach. However this serves the older community well and has been very steadfast and faithful during the challenges of the last two years.

The 11:15 congregation is both in person and online. The music is contemporary and the ministry with children a key value. There is a real drive in this congregation to minister during the week and grow the kingdom of God, beyond that of a Sunday.

During the week St Luke's runs a parent and toddler group called Seedlings.

St Paul's

St Paul's church is very focused on serving the community of Haregate. The service at 10am is family focused and welcoming to all, but there are currently no children's groups running. It is next door to Beresford memorial school with which it has strong links. Weekly worship is led at the school and termly services are held at St Paul's for children and parents together.

The prayer and praise service at St Paul's is a growing experimental service. Often there is no plan, often instead having a focus on listening and sharing.

St Paul's also runs a uniform bank, serving the whole of Leek. This helps both those with limited resources, but also promotes recycling and prevents waste.

Life Together

The ministry of St Luke's and St Paul's is very much joint. The leadership is that of a single church with two buildings and multiple congregations. Leaders, preachers and volunteers, work across both sites and resources are shared.

There are several homegroups at St Luke's and St Paul's which have varied memberships across the parish and provide a great way of the members mixing.

Recently we had a church weekend together, using both buildings equally. All the congregations came together to share in worship and teaching throughout the weekend and most importantly eating together as a single family.

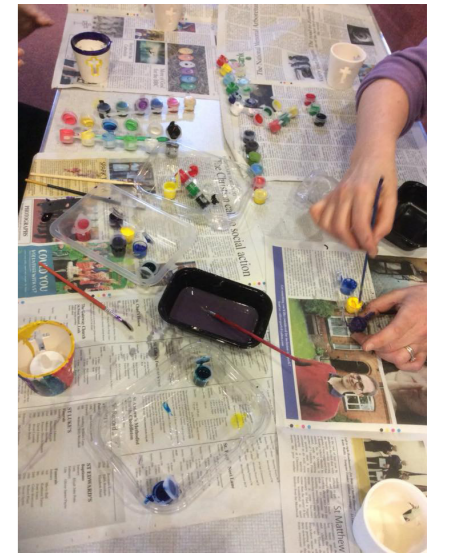
As well as the large team of lay ministers, the parish also employs an administrator who is based at St Paul's and is charged with keeping everyone organised. Tasks ranging from numerous room and hall bookings to the weddings and funerals that the churches perform.

St Matthew's Meerbrook

St Matthew's is part of the Leek and Meerbrook benefice and is currently in interregnum. However, there is currently informal oversight from Rev'd Matt who is sharing his time with them and providing support. The diocese is currently undergoing a review of clergy allocation and the current plan is to make this informal support permanent. This would provide an opportunity for a curate to experience rural ministry in the small village of Meerbrook on the outside of Leek also.

Leek and Meerbrook Benefice

St Paul's and St Luke's is a part of the larger team Benefice of Leek and Meerbrook. Rev'd Nigel Irons is the team rector (St Edward's, central). But we also have All Saints (in interregnum) which is Anglo Catholic. There will be learning opportunities from the wider benefice to learn more about the wide range



of expressions of church that form the wider Church of England.

Curacy Opportunities

A curacy at St Luke's and St Paul's would provide a candidate to engage with and experience the following.

- Working with multiple congregations in differing buildings
- Experience in a wide range of worship styles
- Learning from a busy and energetic church
- Evangelical ministry with an openness to the work of the Holy Spirit
- Ministry with children and young



"We're really grateful for all the support we got from the Diocese, starting with the DDO, who went out of her way to help in finding a good match, and to work out practical matters.

"My vicar has been very supportive, through planning carefully together and weekly supervisions, where we reflect on different areas of ministry. I have been given new challenges progressively, all done sensitively and fitted to the stage I was at. Our churches have been so welcoming to the whole family, and very supportive of my ministry, even when this involves less regular ideas, like planting a tree during a sermon (only in a pot, I regret to say!)."

Revd John Beswick Pallister

people

- Engagement with schools
- Opportunities to experiment and grow a new ministry in a mature, supportive and safe environment.
- Engagement in other expressions of church through the wider benefice
- An insight in the work of the wider diocese
- Encouragement to engage beyond the boundaries of parish.

The challenges

St Luke's and St Paul's face two main challenges: Like many other churches the covid pandemic has impacted the churches attendance, but also individuals' confidence and energy levels. The challenge will be to recover and grow in new ways as God leads us.

The second challenge is that of finance. Resources are tightly managed, and care has to be taken that what we have is used carefully for God's kingdom



Housing and Accommodation

The Diocese of Lichfield either has a curate's house in the benefice or a 'strategic' house for curates in close proximity of the benefice. These are good houses, mainly with three to four bedrooms. If there is no curate's house in the benefice and where such a strategic property exists within easy reach of the proposed training parish this will be the preferred curate's house. If there is no strategic housing available nearby the diocese is committed to providing appropriate accommodation for all those entering ministry. We generally do not offer rented accommodation except as an emergency short term measure. Our curates can be confident that their home will be of a consistently high standard. If you wish to know further details about the house, the BDO will be able to provide you with more information.



Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

Supporting learning and formation

Curate learning, formation and development is strongly valued and affirmed in Lichfield Diocese. Curates receive ongoing supervision and reflection on ministry in the parish, complemented by our curate-training programme in which you share with your year-group of peers. The aim of the training programme is to enable each person to flourish in their ministry and inhabit more deeply their vocation as deacons and priests. This programme supports learning and formation through a partnership between the Diocese and The Queen's Foundation. And it takes place in the context of parish supervision and reflection on ministry.

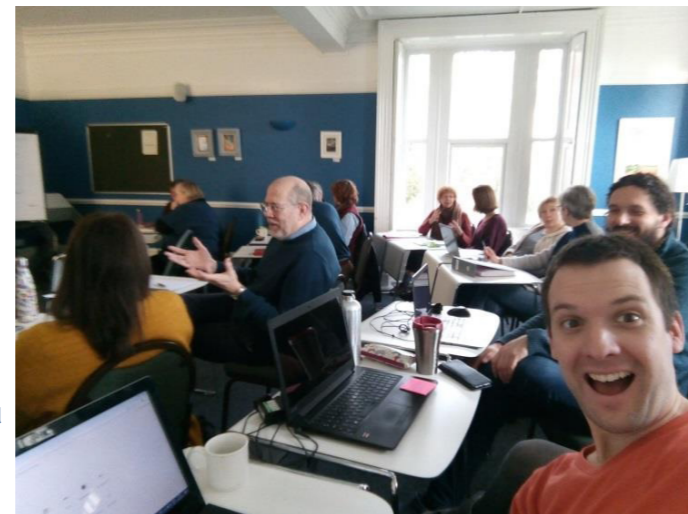
The programme provides space and an environment beyond the parish context in which curates come together with skilled tutors to learn with and from each other's shared experience, so that they can better integrate their practice and reflection, develop their personal qualities, spiritual, ministerial and professional gifts and skills, and deepen their desire to learn.

The curacy experience is very much a collective one, often gathering at Lichfield Diocese's centrally-located Shallowford House for study, prayer, retreat and de-stressing with peers (pandemic permitting): as such, it's a much less scary venue during IME2 than as a base for a BAP!

Pattern of training

The programme focuses on grounded and situated learning and prioritises the Diocese's focus on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism:

- In Year 1 establishing you in your new ministerial context and practice, and supporting your preparation for ordination as priest.
- In Year 2, deepening your practice and understanding of mission and ministry with the theological tools and skills you need to contextualise this.
- In Year 3 helping you prepare for life-long ministry and to take up a post of responsibility to be entered into with skill and confidence.



IME2 to equip for ministry

At the heart of the programme are residential events which bring together a year-group of curates. They reflect the diversity of the Church, while the different ministry contexts reflect the diversity of the Diocese. This cohort is the primary context for the essential learning and formation to develop your ministries, focusing on ministerial formation, and on the development of relationships which enable mutual flourishing for all.

Opportunities for academic awards

Alongside the IME2 training you may wish to continue studying on an accredited pathway with Common Awards. Curates who already have a Diploma award from IME1 may register for a BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission. Others who already have a degree or higher award or are recognised as potential theological educators have opportunities to further their studies alongside their curate programme.

"We have had amazing support from the diocese over the 6 years through both of our curacies and that's not always been straightforward- particularly when 'life' sometimes gets in the way!

"But the support, through thick and thin has been fantastic, particularly discerning Adam's call to pioneering ministry and curacy under 'pioneer' supervision."

Revds Adam & Charlotte Gompertz

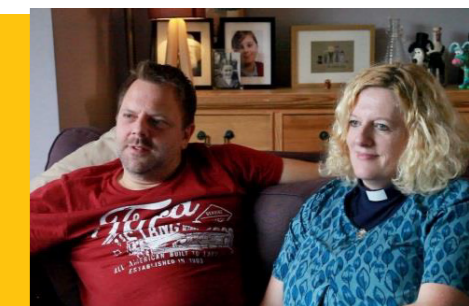


Care for curates and families

The wellbeing of clergy and their families is very important to us. In addition to the supervisory aspects to curacy, we have a free, confidential counselling service (the Listening Ear scheme) for all clergy, diocesan staff and their families.

More info

– contact the BDO (details on back cover) or visit lichfield.anglican.org/curacy



Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

For further information

In the first instance, please contact:

The Revd Romita Shrisunder,

Bishops' Director of Ordinands

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[E] romita.shrisunder@lichfield.anglican.org

Find us on:

AChurchNearYou:

achurchnearyou.com/church/4356/

YouTube:

youtube.com/c/StLukesandStPaulsChurch

Website:

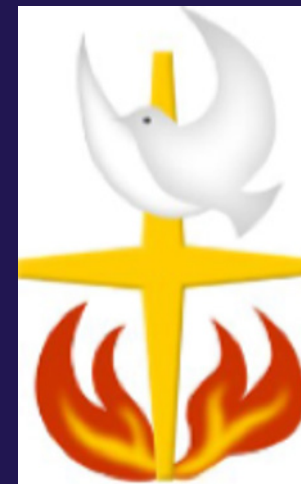
leekparish.org.uk/churches/st-edwards-church/

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St Luke & St Paul's Leek.

Seek, Build, Share, Love:



Working to grow
the Kingdom of God
as a part of the
Leek and Meerbrook benefice.